

High Peaks Audubon

Adirondack-Champlain Region of New York State

Mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems in the Adirondacks, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

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March—May 2007



**Saturday, March 31, 2007 1:00 p.m., Lake Forest
Whip-poor-will Monitoring in New York State
Speaker: Matthew Medler**

Results from the second New York State Breeding Bird Atlas suggest dramatic decreases in the numbers of Whip-poor-wills and Common nighthawks breeding in New York. Such declines are consistent with Atlas results and anecdotal evidence from neighboring states and provinces. As a result, a Northeast Nightjar Survey project was established in 2005 to collect population trend information for these poorly-known birds. In 2006, New York participated in this regional project on a limited basis, and in 2007, the state's survey efforts will be expanded under the guidance of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA). Matthew will be discussing the 2006 survey results, with an emphasis on New York State hotspots, and be looking for volunteers to help with the 2007 survey effort.

Matthew will discuss evidence of Whip-poor-will declines in the Northeast, present results of a regional Whip-poor-will monitoring project that was initiated in 2006, and highlight the relative abundance of Whip-poor-wills in Clinton County. He will also be looking for volunteers to help with the 2007 New York State survey effort, which will be coordinated by the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA).



Louis Agassiz Fuertes

**Saturday, April 7, 2007, 1:00 p.m.
Paul Smith's Visitor Interpretative Center
New York's Second Breeding Bird Atlas: 20 Years of Change.**

New York State has recently completed its second Breeding Bird Atlas Project. In this presentation, the publication's Co-Editor, Kim Corwin will share the results of the five-year survey. The presentation will include distribution maps for Adirondack species and comparisons between this recently completed project and the Breeding Bird Atlas of 1980-85. Some species have shown remarkable increases while others have shifted their distribution in unexpected ways.

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L.A.F.

HPAS

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A chapter of National Audubon Society
serving the Adirondack/Champlain region
of northern New York, including Clinton,
Essex, Franklin and Hamilton counties.

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Saturday, May 26th, 2007, 1:00 p.m.

The Wild Center in Tupper Lake

Reptile and Amphibians of the Adirondack Park: Behavior, Ecology Identification.

Naturalist Kenneth Barnett will present information on the behavior, ecology, and identification of reptiles and amphibians in the Adirondack Park. The program will help the public and other interested individuals understand this unique group of animals, and also prepare volunteers for the new All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) of the Adirondack Park. Kenny will cover topics that include: handling techniques, habitat preferences, toxins, species identification and myths. This hands-on workshop will take a close-up look at some of our least known native reptiles and amphibians.



Saturday, April 14, 2007, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Paul Smith's College

Uniting for Climate Action at PSC

Paul Smith's College is holding an early Earth Day/Energy Fair Festival on campus. Community organizers and local businesses will be invited along with various other stakeholders (politicos, NGO's, not-for-profits, farmers, gardeners, natural builders, artists, musicians, etc.). Teach in presentations, music, recreational activities, letter writing activities, organized meetings and other events are planned.

Location: Paul Smith's College is located at the intersection of Routes 30 & 86.

Bring: Lunch

Registration: No need to pre-register

Uniting for Climate Action at PSC is one of some 683 (as of late February) events planned in 48 states across the country. All of these events, the initiative of Step It Up 2007, are intended to send the same message: "Tell Congress: Cut Carbon by 80% by 2050," and April 14th has been designated a National Day of Cli-

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A Message From The President

A few months ago on this page I praised the tireless volunteering of many of our members. Our work would not happen without them. It is with great sadness that I learned of the passing of one of our most steadfast members and supporters, Dr. Roger Heintz.

I was a relative newcomer to HPAS when I was in charge of field trips for the NYSOA (then "The Federation") annual meeting in Lake Placid. Judy and Roger didn't hesitate when I asked them to lead a group to one of the field trip locations, and they had plenty of helpful hints for me. They had obviously done this before. The ease and calm with which they accomplished these tasks was quite a comfort to me.

Roger will be sorely missed by HPAS, and I'm sure its members join me in offering Judy our deepest sympathy

—Pat Thaxton

Sunday, March 11th, 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Bigelow Road/Bloomingdale Bog

Look for breeding white-winged crossbills in prime habitat during this bumper crop cone year, as well as gray jays and black-backed woodpeckers, with long-time Lake Placid resident and Saranac Lake CBC compiler Larry Master. With a little luck you'll hear crossbills singing up and down Bigelow Road.

Call for meeting place and directions: 518.523.2214

Saturday, April 28, 2007
The Champlain Valley:
Spring Birds
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Description: Join Pat and John Thaxton for a spring birding trip in the Champlain Valley. Highlights will probably include Yellow-rumped and Nashville warbler, Blue-headed vireo, Hermit thrush, Yellow-bellied sapsucker and Sharp-shinned or Cooper's hawks. We will likely see Common and Hooded mergansers and other ducks, cormorants and gulls. After checking out the birds at the Westport Boat Launch, the group will visit a variety of habitats—shoreline, woods and fields—including Noblewood Park in Essex.

Bring: Appropriate apparel and footwear for the weather and ground conditions, binoculars, spotting scope, water and snacks.

Meet: Westport Boat Launch

Registration: Contact Pat & John Thaxton, 518.576.4232, or email JPThax5317@aol.com



John Thaxton

Saturday, May 12, 2007
Hulls Falls Road 7:30 a.m.

Meet at the Marcy Field end of Hulls Falls Road and look for birds with High Peaks Audubon Society member Ruth Kuhfahl (518) 576-4699. On last year's May walk in this diverse habitat we found nesting Pine warblers, Solitary sandpiper and Indigo bunting. No need to sign up ahead. Jointly sponsored by the Hurricane Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club and High Peaks Audubon Society.

Saturday, May 19, 2007
Breakfast With The Birds
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Description: Join Pat and John Thaxton on the deck of their house in Keene for coffee, cake, fruit, juice and birds. First, we will listen for the birds and practice identifying them by ear. Then, we will hopefully see them and verify our identifications because in early May the leaves in our 16-acre yard are small and few and far between, and our deck looks directly into the canopy. Nesting warblers include Black-throated blue, Black-throated green, Blackburnian, Yellow-rumped, Ovenbird, Magnolia, Nashville and Black and white; other nesters include Red-eyed and Blue-headed vireo, Yellow-bellied sapsucker, Downy, Hairy and Pileated woodpecker, American Robin, Ruffed Grouse, Common Raven, etc. If things grow quiet on the deck, a short walk down our road usually includes stops for Chestnut-sided warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird and Red-shouldered and Broad-winged hawk. Maybe we'll be lucky this year...

Bring: Binoculars, walking shoes.

Directions: From the intersection of Route 73 & 9N South (between Keene & Keene Valley), turn east towards Elizabethtown; go approximately 2 miles uphill to where road levels and look for Baxter Mountain Lane (just beyond little yellow house) on right; go past Round Top Lane on left, pass a house on left as road levels, look for driveway on right, #84, and take it to the end.

Registration: Contact Pat & John Thaxton, 518.576.4232, or email JPThax5317@aol.com.

Ferrisburgh Christmas Bird Count 2006

A bright sunny day and temperatures near 50^o F led to very pleasant birding for the 47th annual Ferrisburgh Christmas Bird Count on Saturday December 16, 2006. Abundant ice-free water, but paltry wild food supplies led to a mixed bag in terms of totals for the count. Forty-one individuals broke into 13 teams and covered 630.5 miles over 151.5 hours. Their efforts were aided by four feeder counts. The number of birds counted – 13,063 – was below our ten year average, but the number of species observed – 79 – was slightly above. An additional two species missed on count day, brown-headed cowbird and coot, were recorded during the count period.

Sixteen species of ducks and geese made an appearance. Probably the biggest highlight was a greater white-fronted goose on Button Bay. This was the first time the species had been recorded since 1998 and only the fourth individual in the history of the count. There were more white-winged scoters (36) than ever before with a black scoter mixed in as well. Other unusual ducks recorded included a wood duck, two gadwall, ten greater scaup and six ring-necked ducks. Some of the more common ducks were less abundant than normal. We had the fewest mallards (93) since 1993, and the fewest black ducks (21) since 1967! Also appearing on the lake were our first Bonaparte's gulls in five years.

Raptor numbers were about average. Seven species of hawks included highlights of a goshawk from the New York area and a wealth of 27 northern harriers – the most since 1994. Two peregrines constituted our only falcons. The small field species – American kestrel, was missed for the first time since 1966.

A clear windless night led to good owl numbers. Our 19 great horned owls were the most in the history of the count, while 10 eastern screech-owls tied a record set in 2005. Most excitingly, a snowy owl was spotted in Panton, the first appearance of this charismatic species since 1998.

Field birds were hard to come by. Our 45 horned larks was the lowest count since 1978, and only with great persistence and dedication did field teams turn up a single snow bunting and a single common redpoll. Even wild turkeys seemed less numerous, with only 31 representing a dramatic decrease from last years 252, though some known flocks did not appear for the day.

In the songbirds, we lacked any truly remarkable species. Eleven Carolina wrens meant two years in the double digits for this species. Five sparrow species included the usual suspects (American tree, song, dark-eyed junco, and the fairly regular white throated) and also two white-crowned sparrows, a species seen on only about half the counts over the last ten years. Winter finch diversity was unremarkable. There were no crossbills or grosbeaks, and only two pine siskins. The 32 purple finches reported by four groups represented the most since 2000.

Thank you to all field participants and feeder watchers for another successful count. We look forward to seeing you again on Saturday December 15, 2007 for the 48th annual count.

— Mike Winslow

Summary

Common loon 21, Red-throated loon 4, Red-necked grebe 6, Horned grebe 54, Great-blue heron 5, Canada goose 1023, Snow goose 1790, G. white-fronted goose 1, Mallard 93, A. black duck 21, Wood duck 1, Gadwall 2, Common goldeneye 780, Bufflehead 53, White-winged scoter 36, Black scoter 1, Ring-necked duck 6, Greater scaup 10, Hooded merganser 15, Common merganser 95, Red-breasted merg. 12, Northern goshawk 1, Sharp-shinned hawk 4, Cooper's hawk 5, Red-tailed hawk 48, Rough-legged hawk 18, Bald eagle 14, Northern harrier 27, Peregrine falcon 2, Ruffed grouse 18, Ring-necked pheasant 2, Wild turkey 31, American coot CP, G. black-backed gull 41, Herring gull 24, Ring-billedgull 187, Bonaparte's gull 30, Gull sp. 50, Rock pigeon 717, Mourning dove 579, E. screech-owl 10, Great horned owl 19, Barred owl 2, Short-eared owl 1, Snowy owl 1, Belted kingfisher 2, Northern flicker 3, Pileated woodpecker 24, Hairy woodpecker 32, Downy woodpecker 84, Red-bellied woodpecker 1, Northern shrike 3, Blue jay 289, Common raven 27, American crow 657, Horned lark 45, Black-cap. chickadee 923, Tufted titmouse 108, White-br.nuthatch 155, Red-br. nuthatch 23, Brown creeper 15, Carolina wren 11, American robin 153, Eastern bluebird 24, Golden-crowned kinglet 30, Northern mockingbird 2, European starling 2095, Cedar waxwing 353, Northern cardinal 144, Dark-eyed junco 211, A. tree sparrow 369, White-throated sparrow 2, White-crowned sparrow 2, Song sparrow 4, Snow bunting 1, Brown-headed cowbird CP, Purple finch 32, House finch 105, Common redpoll 1, Pine siskin 2, American goldfinch 583, House sparrow 688

Plattsburgh Christmas Bird Count 2006

2006 Christmas Bird Count Summary for the Plattsburgh, NY/ VT (NYPL)circle 44o39' N 73o29'W, as described in 1986 with the center at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base. The 2006 CBC for this area was held on Sunday, December 17 from 07:00 to 16:30 with temperatures ranging from 37oF to 45oF under variable cloudy to partly cloudy skies. There was no snow cover. The variable south to southwest wind was between 5-10mph. The 26 field observers logged 63.75 party hours and 428.3 total miles of which 14.45 hours and 20.7 miles were on foot. One field participant logged 3 hours kayaking near Valcour Island. The 20 feeder watchers spent 59 hours at feeders. There were 57 species recorded and 8031 individuals counted. An additional 5 species were found during the count week.

(continued next page)

Summary

Snow Goose 377, Canada Goose 1112, American Black Duck 56, Mallard 379, Lesser Scaup 2, Bufflehead 1, Common goldeneye 308, Hooded Merganser 21, Common Merganser, 77 Red-breasted Merganser 1, Ring-necked Pheasant 2, Ruffed Grouse 6, Wild Turkey 77, Common Loon 2, Pied-billed Grebe 3, Great Blue Heron 3, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 2, Cooper's Hawk 4, Red-tailed Hawk 6, American Coot 3, Ring-billed Gull 316, Herring Gull 49, Great Black-backed Gull 7, Rock Pigeon 858, Mourning Dove 442, Downy Woodpecker 58, Hairy Woodpecker 33, Pileated Woodpecker 5, Northern Shrike 1, Blue Jay 144, American Crow 775, Common Raven 2, Black-capped Chickadee 750, Tufted Titmouse 10, Red-breasted Nuthatch 22, White-breasted Nuthatch 68, Brown Creeper 10, Kinglet 7, Eastern Bluebird 4, American Robin 5, Northern Mockingbird 1, European Starling 1091, Cedar Waxwing 94, Yellow-throated Warbler 1, American Tree Sparrow 26, Song Sparrow 1, White-throated Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed Junco 89, Northern Cardinal 57, Common Grackle 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 1, Purple Finch 3, House Finch 92, American Goldfinch 240, Evening Grosbeak 2, House Sparrow 322. Also seen during count week were Long-tailed Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Horned Grebe, Bald Eagle and Carolina Wren.

The field participants were Tom Armstrong, Helen Booth, Robert Booth, Robin Brown, Joan Clark, Una Creedon-Carey, Paul Dame, Peter Galvani, Judith Heintz, Roger Heintz, Candy Hess, John Hess, Kevin Kelley, Gail Kemp, William Krueger, Janet Mihuc, Dayna Lalonde, Julie Lattrell, Melanie McCormack, Jim Nolan, Nancy Olsen, Sonal Patel, Michele Snyder, Gary Sturgis, Irma Teittinen, Saana Teittinen-Gordon and Dan Vogt.

Feeder watchers were Gwen Canteenwalla, Joy Cayea, Walter Coryea, Ralph Clark, Julie Dumas, Bob Elmore, Holland Fitts, Elizabeth Fitts, Jan Forsman, Evelyn Fuller, Euclid Jones, Ann Korthis, Karen Moffa, Bill Morgan, Helle Parker, Scott Preston, Debbie Ribis, Ingeborg Sapp, Bill Ston, and Lynn Valenti.

The Yellow-throated Warbler stayed around from the time Brian McAllister first found it about November 15. Julie Lattrell was able to view this bird among the chickadees, even without binoculars. Although each group of participants and the feeder watchers perceived that we had a slow day, we had about average number of birds and species.

—Judy Heintz

Elizabethtown CBC

44°13'N 73°36'W Center at Essex Co. Courthouse. Dec 23, 2006; 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp: 40° to 49°F. Wind Variable, 0-5 m.p.h. Snow cover: 0-1 inches. Still water partly frozen, moving water open. A.M.: cloudy with light to heavy rain. P.M.: cloudy with no rain to heavy rain. Observers: 23 in field in 8 parties (non-owling). Total party-hours: 64.5 (27.5 on foot and 37.0 by car). Total party-miles: 373.9 (24.9 on foot and 349 by car). Feeder effort: none. Owling effort: 5 miles covered in 1.25 hours.

Mallard 24, Hooded Merganser 20, Ruffed Grouse 17, Wild Turkey 35, Northern Harrier 1, Cooper's Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 9, Rough-legged Hawk 5, Rock Pigeon 113, Mourning Dove 171, Barred Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Downy Woodpecker 44, Hairy Woodpecker 18, Pileated Woodpecker 5, Northern Shrike 3, Blue Jay 165, American Crow 221, Common Raven 28, Black-capped Chickadee 709, Boreal Chickadee 3, Tufted Titmouse 28, Red-breasted Nuthatch 105, White-breasted Nuthatch 33, Brown Creeper 9, Carolina Wren 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 31, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1, Eastern Bluebird 3, American Robin 9, Gray Catbird 1, European Starling 254, American Tree Sparrow 129, Dark-eyed Junco 145, Northern Cardinal 18, Purple Finch 2, House Finch 4, Red Crossbill 7, American Goldfinch 128, Evening Grosbeak 23, House Sparrow 40.

Totals: 41 count-day species; 2,566 individuals.

Participants: Robin Brown, Sally Conyne, Una Creedon-Carey, Beth Edmonds, Frank Gill, Don Griffin, Julie Hart (co-compiler), Ruth Kuhfahl, Matthew Medler (co-compiler), Megan Murphy, Dan Nickerson, Stan Oliva, John M.C. Peterson, Susan French Peterson, Dana Rohleder, Nancy Slack, Carole Slatkin, Hank Stebbins, Eric Teed, John Thaxton, Pat Thaxton, Eve Ticknor, and Yvette Tillema.

The 34th annual Elizabethtown Christmas Bird Count was conducted on Saturday, December 23, 2006. Centered in the Essex County seat of Elizabethtown, the count circle includes three ecozones--the Lake Champlain Valley, the Eastern Adirondack Foothills, and the Adirondack High Peaks. In the east, the circle extends to within a mile of the shore of Lake Champlain, while the western half of the circle is dominated by Hurricane Mountain and Giant Mountain (New York State's 12th highest peak, at 4,627 feet). The vast majority of the count area is forested, with hemlock-northern hardwood and white pine-northern hardwood forests predominating. There are also belts of spruce-fir forest on the upper elevations of Hurricane and Giant; while the peaks of these two mountains are usually inaccessible due to ice and snow, this year's mild weather allowed for the coverage of Hurricane all the way to its summit. In typical years, the fast-flowing sections of the Boquet River provide the only significant sections of open water in the count circle. But again, due to the mild December weather, there was much more open water for this year's count, including Lincoln Pond, which hosted 18 Hooded Mergansers.

The twenty-three participants on this year's count tallied 2,566 individuals of 41 species. The number of individuals was

slightly below the count average of 2,684, but the species total was three above average. Despite a high number of participants and party-hours for the count, only one new high species count was established--20 Hooded Mergansers. There were, however, several species with relatively high counts, including Wild Turkey, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Mourning Dove, Tufted Titmouse, and Northern Cardinal. Rare to uncommon birds for the Elizabethtown count included the count's first-ever Gray Catbird, as well as Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Carolina Wren, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Finch diversity was decent, with five species reported, but totals were low for all five.

The count day's high temperatures were representative of what was, until the last few days of the month, a very mild December. Light to heavy rain during the count, coupled with fog in parts of the count circle, presented challenging conditions to the count's dedicated participants. December's warm weather undoubtedly contributed to the record total of Hooded Mergansers on the count, and while it might have contributed to the presence of the count's first Gray Catbird, it did not help produce other more-expected winter lingerers such as Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, or Brown-headed Cowbird. Somewhat ironically, the warm weather did allow for the counting of two Boreal Chickadees near the summit of Hurricane, at a much higher elevation than is normally accessible to observers.

I would like to thank all of the participants for their commitment to the Elizabethtown CBC, and would especially like to thank Julie Hart for all of her help in compiling the count. I look forward to next year's count!

—Matt Medler

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mate action.

Uniting for Climate Action at Paul Smiths College

Step It Up 2007 is the brainchild of Bill McKibben and Paul Hawken, an attempt to stage a huge protest that consists of hundreds of smaller, local protests. The best way to find out what existing events will take place on April 14th is to visit the Step It Up 2007 website: www.stepitup2007.org. The website, searchable by state or zip code, has lists and descriptions of events, including several in the Adirondacks and nearby towns in Vermont. The site also includes information and tools to help individuals or groups put together their own event. Below are some excerpts from a letter Bill McKibben wrote describing the National Day of Climate Action.

Dear Friends,

This is an invitation to help start a movement—to take one spring day and use it to reshape the future. Those of us who know that **climate change** is the greatest threat civilization now faces have science on our side; we have economists and policy specialists, courageous mayors and governors, engineers with cool new technology.

But we don't have a movement—the largest rally yet held in the U.S. about global warming drew a thousand people. If we're going to make the kind of change we need in the short time left us, we need something that looks like the civil rights movement, and we need it now. Changing light bulbs just isn't enough.

So pitch in. A few of us are trying to organize a nationwide day of hundreds and hundreds of rallies on April 14. We hope to have gatherings in every state, and in many of America's most iconic places: on the levees in New Orleans, on top of the melting glaciers on Mt. Rainier, even underwater on the endangered coral reefs off Key West.

We need rallies outside churches, along the tide lines in our coastal cities, in cornfields and forests and on statehouse steps.

Every group will be saying the same thing: Step It Up, Congress! Enact immediate cuts in carbon emissions, and pledge an 80% reduction by 2050. No half measures, no easy compromises—the time has come to take the real actions that can stabilize our climate.

As people gather, we'll link pictures of the protests together electronically via the web—before the weekend is out, we'll have the largest protest the country has ever seen, not in numbers but in extent. From every corner of the nation we'll start to shake things up.

You don't have to have ever done anything like this—you're not organizing a March on Washington, just a gathering of scores or hundreds in your town or neighborhood.

We need creativity, good humor, commitment. If you are active in a campus group or a church or a local environmental group or a garden society or a bike club—or if you just saw Al Gore's movie and want to do something—then we need you now.

And by now, we mean now.

The best science tells us we have ten years to fundamentally transform our economy and lead the world in the same direction or else, in the words of NASA's Jim Hansen, we will face a "totally different planet," one infinitely sadder and less flourishing.

The recent elections have given us an opening, and polling shows most Americans know there's a problem. But the forces of inertia and business-as-usual are still in control, and only our voices, united and loud, joyful and determined, can change that reality.

Please join us.

—Bill McKibben

Saranac Lake CBC

Saranac Lake, N.Y. - Dec. 30, 2006; 7:00 am to 4:30 pm. Temp. 19 to 28 degrees F. Wind W 0-8. Snow depth 2-6 in. Still water partly open. Moving water open. A.M.: cloudy, heavy snow. PM: cloudy. Observers: 29 in field in 15 parties (non-owling), plus 2 at feeders. Time and Distance: 4 hours at feeders; 5.75 hours and 49.5 miles owling. Total party-hours 91 and party-miles 436.5; 44 hours and 44.25 miles on foot, 47 hours and 392.25 miles by car.

Canada Goose 1154; Am. Black Duck 8; Mallard 318; Hooded Merganser 24; Ruffed Grouse 13; Wild Turkey 13; Bald Eagle 1; Red-tailed Hawk 1; Rock Pigeon 149; Mourning Dove 84; Great-horned Owl cw; Barred Owl 3; Northern Saw-whet Owl 1; Downy Woodpecker 29; Hairy Woodpecker 23; Black-backed Woodpecker 4; Pileated Woodpecker 9; N. Shrike 2; Gray Jay 5; Blue Jay 122; Am. Crow 249; Com. Raven 44; Black-capped Chickadee 987; Boreal Chickadee 13; Red-breasted Nuthatch 126; White-breasted Nuthatch 13; Brown Creeper 8; Golden-crowned Kinglet 49; American Robin cw; Eur. Starling 166; Cedar Waxwing 2; Am. Tree Sparrow 35; Dark-eyed (Slate-col.) Junco 215; Snow Bunting 43; N. Cardinal 19; Brown-headed Cowbird cw; Purple Finch 176; Red Crossbill 7; White-winged Crossbill 62; Common Redpoll 25; Pine Siskin 154; Am. Goldfinch 872; Evening Grosbeak 4; House Sparrow 22.

Total: 42 species; 5254 individuals.

Participants: Tom Armstrong, Jeff Bolsinger, John Brown, Joan Collins, Tom Dudones, Peter Galvani, Ed Grant, Julie Hart, Audrey Hyson, Dayna LaLonde, Linda LaPan, Fuat Latif, Ted Mack, Brian McAllister, Melanie McCormick, Matt Medler (co-compiler), Sean O'Brien, Mary O'Dell, Dan Peters, Carol Pinney, Dana Rohleder, Sheila and Lew Rosenberg, Nina and Bill Schoch, Janet Stein, Eileen and Tom Wheeler, Matt Young.

A geographically widespread and taxonomically diverse (spruces, fir, hemlocks, tamarack, pine) conifer seed-mast led quite predictably to the biannual surge in the numbers of conifer mast eating finches. But before one despairs about an absence of finches next winter and a decline in India's revenue from niger (*Guizotia abyssinica*) seed exports later this year, redpolls are equally predictable and have the courtesy to brighten our winters in alternate years from these other finches. The cone crop also leads to a predictable surge in small mammals (e.g., deer mice), which in turn likely induced many Saw-whet Owls to remain in the north woods this winter rather than migrate south to warmer climes.

What makes this count stand out from preceding 50 Saranac Lake counts is the remarkably warm weather leading up to the count and continuing to mid-January. Mirror Lake in Lake Placid did not freeze over for the winter until mid-January, eclipsing its latest recorded freeze date by more than three weeks! Although slightly warmer than normal temperatures are to be expected with an El Nino event, this year's past record warmth continues a worldwide trend of accelerating global heating and other climate changes, with 2007 forecast to be the warmest year on record. The warm weather may have accounted for the late migrating flocks of Canada Geese totaling 1,154 individuals; the previous record (set just last year) was only 50 individuals. Dark-eyed Juncos put in their second best showing ever with 215 individuals (10x the average count) and records were broken or equaled for Hooded Mergansers, Saw-whet Owl, Black-backed and Pileated Woodpeckers, Common Ravens, and Northern Cardinals.

Many thanks to Matt Medler and Julie Hart for assuming co-compiler duties on count day. Next year's redpoll-bejeweled count is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 30.

—Larry Master

To Dr. Roger Heintz, 1937-2007

This issue of the HPAS newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Roger Heintz, a longtime member, supporter and volunteer.

I remember happening upon Roger and his wife Judy at the Great Adirondack Birding Festival a few years ago. As I approached the Paul Smiths VIC I saw them sitting close together on a bench by the entrance doors, playing with what seemed obviously a grandchild. The toddler was standing on Judy's thighs, holding her hands and giggling and squealing as Judy made goo-goo noises and rocked the baby up and down. Roger quietly watched, wearing a smile so subtle and yet so full of tenderness I remember feeling suddenly awkward, suddenly humbled by what struck me as an enormous capacity to love.

I know I speak for many HPAS members when I say I will miss Roger, and that I will always think of him during future Christmas Bird Counts, as he and Judy compiled the Plattsburgh CBC for many years. And I know many HPAS members will join me and Pat in offering Judy our sincerest sympathies for her unimaginable loss.

--John Thaxton

Editor's Note

After considering ourselves lucky to get in a few skis on a Lake Placid golf course, and after grouching about not-really-skiiable back country trails rife with patches of ice and protruding rocks and roots, Pat and I finally skied into Avalanche Lake, a full six weeks earlier than we had last year. And then the Valentine's Day Blizzard dropped so much snow (38 inches at our house) that we inveighed against the need to spend an entire day off shoveling snow not only from the deck and the roof of the not-yet-completed screened-in porch but also from the mastodon-looking mound of snow covering the cord of wood I had the sense to order, though not to stack, before the storm.

The end of global warming? Hardly. Rather, it seems precisely like what the climate computer models predicted, two intense low pressure systems uncharacteristically wrapping around each other, intensifying an already intensely wet, unstable and stationary front. The night before last my electronic thermometer registered a low of minus 14 degrees Fahrenheit; this afternoon it read 34.8—a 48.8 degree change in temperature in 36 hours. Wild shifts in temperature and pressure, increasingly powerful storms, new and unusual conditions and patterns. This past Saturday as we dressed to ski we listened to NOAA Weather Radio and discovered they had issued an avalanche alert, which I noted but promptly forgot as we skied the Porter Mountain Trails at Van Hoevenberg.

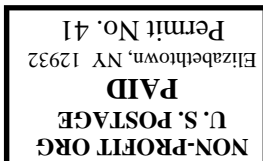
On the way home we encountered road crews with multiple bulldozers, backhoes and top loaders cleaning up an avalanche that had partially filled Route 73 where it runs through Cascade Pass. I've experienced outrageous weather conditions in that pass, and have driven twenty miles out of my way to avoid it, but an avalanche?

And how do you like that Yellow-throated warbler hanging out at Ausable Marsh deep into January, or that first ever Gray catbird on the Elizabethtown Christmas Bird Count?

I gave some space to an initiative called the National Day of Climate Action, which Bill McKibben explains considerably more eloquently than I could in a letter outlining the goal of *Step It Up 2007*, a grass roots organization hoping to generate hundreds of protests on April 14th, 2007. Demonstrations, more than 600 so far, will take place everywhere from Keene and Paul Smiths to the melting glaciers on Mt. Rainier, the levees of New Orleans and on the endangered coral reefs off the Florida Keys. It's an exciting concept we should all look forward to seeing and participating in if possible.

The Christmas Bird Counts went very well (you'll find the results and summaries of all four inside) and we have a terrific lineup of programs and field trips scheduled for spring, including Kim Corwin's presentation on New York's second Breeding Bird Atlas. Board member Matthew Medler will talk about the Northeast Nightjar Survey and Kenny Barnett will not only give a talk on Reptiles and Amphibians of the Adirondacks but will also let you handle his beautiful hognose snakes.

And if that sounds a tad slimy you can always visit with me and Pat at our bird and breakfast. —**John Thaxton**



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